

an intermediate station operable at said intermediate location and adapted to receive said information transmitted by said transmitting station, wherein said intermediate station comprises:

a converter circuit adapted to electronically receive said transmitted information and to convert said transmission to electronic form if said transmitted information is not initially in electronic form; and

a reproducing circuit adapted to reproduce said information in human readable form, wherein said reproducing circuit also produces an indicia of payment authorizing delivery of said human readable information to said selected location.

58. The system of claim 57, wherein said intermediate location is selected according to proximity to said selected location.

59. The system of claim 58, wherein said intermediate location selection is accomplished automatically by said transmitting location through reference to address information with respect to said selected location.

60. The system of claim 57, wherein said intermediate location is selected according to proximity to said transmitting location.

61. The system of claim 57, wherein said converter circuit comprises: circuitry adapted to accept electronic documents communicated utilizing different communication protocols.

62. The method of claim 61, wherein said different communication protocols include at least two protocols selected from the group consisting of:

a standardized electronic mail protocol;
a special purpose mail communication protocol;
a standardized facsimile protocol;
a standardized character based protocol; and
a standardized packet based protocol.

63. The system of claim 57, wherein said converter circuit further comprises: circuitry adapted to determine delivery address information with respect to said selected location from information contained within said transmitted information.

64. The system of claim 63, wherein said converter circuit further comprises: circuitry adapted to verify the accuracy of said delivery address information.

65. (Amended) The system of claim 57, further comprising:
means for including ancillary information with said transmitted information, said ancillary information being suitable for use by said [receiving means] intermediate station in delivery of said transmitted information to said selected location.

66. The system of claim 65, wherein said ancillary information comprises: means for funding the delivery of said transmitted information.

67. The system of claim 66, wherein said intermediate station further comprises: an acknowledgment circuit adapted to produce an acknowledgment of receipt of said transmitted information; and

wherein said acknowledgment circuitry is further adapted to transmit said acknowledgment to said transmitting location, wherein said last mentioned portion of the acknowledgment circuit is inactive until said funding means is confirmed.

68. The system of claim 66, wherein said funding means includes at least a value data packet.

69. The system of claim 68, wherein said value is deducted from a credit stored at said transmitting location.

70. The system of claim 65, wherein said ancillary information includes a delivery address of said selected location.

71. The system of claim 70, wherein said converter circuit further comprises:
means for verifying the accuracy of said delivery address information.

72. The system of claim 65, wherein said ancillary information includes a time of transmission of said document by said transmitting means, said time being provided by a secure time piece disposed at said transmitting location.

73. The system of claim 65, wherein said ancillary information includes specific delivery information regarding the delivery of said human readable information, indicating selection of at least one delivery option of a plurality of delivery options available for delivery of said transmitted information.

74. The system of claim 57, wherein said reproducing circuit is operable at least in part with corresponding circuitry disposed at said selected location.

90. The system of claim 57, wherein said intermediate station further comprises:
an acknowledgment circuit adapted to produce an acknowledgment of receipt of said transmitted information.

REMARKS

I. General

Claims 57-74 and 90 are pending in the present application and stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections of record.

Claim 65 has been amended to correct an informality discovered during the preparation of this Amendment. Specifically, claim 65 has been amended to recite “said intermediate station” rather than “said receiving means” for which no antecedent basis was provided in the base claim. No new matter has been added.